

REMARKS

1. *Status of the Application.* Claims 1-16 were pending in the application prior to examination. In the Office Action, all claims 1-16 were rejected for various bases under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ("§ 112" or "Section 112"); claims 1-4, and 6-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 ("§ 102" or "Section 102"); and claims 5 and 10-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 ("§ 103" or "Section 103")..

One paragraph of the Specification, and claims 1-3, 5-6, and 10-16 are amended herein. No new matter is added by way of these amendments.

2. *Amendment to the Specification.* The paragraph on page 2, lines 13-15 has been amended herein to eliminate what the Assignee regards as a somewhat clumsy language. It is submitted that the amended language adds no new matter to the specification, but merely enhances the clarity of the description.

3. *Section 112 Rejections.* According to the Office Action, the Specification was "replete with grammatical errors and indefinite language," and offers "a few examples" of such errors in paragraphs 3-11 of the Office Action.

Applicant has made amendments to claims 1-3, 5-6, and 10-16 that are believed to address each of the perceived errors and instances of indefiniteness, including those specifically called out in the Office Action.

Addressing certain items specifically noted in the Office Action, the terms “properly” and “substantially” have been eliminated from the claims altogether, thereby eliminating any basis for rejection based on alleged indefiniteness of those terms.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of all § 112 rejections is respectfully requested.

4. *The Section 102 Rejections.* Claims 1-4 and 6-9 were rejected under § 102 as being anticipated by Japanese Patent No. 5919768 (“the Nissan Patent”). It is respectfully submitted that reliance on the Nissan Patent in support of the § 102 rejections is misplaced, and that such rejections should be withdrawn.

As best understood based on the characterization of the Nissan Patent in the Office Action as well as the English-language Abstract of the Nissan Patent, it would appear that the Nissan Patent discloses a gear arrangement for minimizing the generation of noises resulting from “backlash” arising from imperfect engagement of a driving gear and a driven gear. The Nissan Patent appears to propose providing a “sub gear” associated with the driven gear, the teeth of the sub gear having a radial slot therein to ensure that tight contact is made between the driving gear and the driven gear.

Figure 8a of the Nissan Patent illustrates an example of a gear tooth having a radial slot (14). Careful examination of this exemplary embodiment shows that there is a small circular opening at the base of the radial slot. Apparently, this circular opening enables an elastic deformation of the “half teeth” defined on each side of the radial slot.

It appears clearly that the half-tooth on one side of the radial slot is identical to the half tooth on the opposing side of the radial slot.

In the invention as disclosed and claimed in the present application, on the other hand, is directed not to reduction of noise generated by a driven gear and a driving gear, but to the elimination of "play" between the teeth, which can undesirably cause the hand of a watch to be displayed off-center.

In particular, in accordance with the invention as disclosed and claimed in the present application, only a single one half tooth of each pair of half teeth has a recess formed therein, leaving the opposite half tooth of each pair "complete," and hence comparatively more rigid than the other. This arrangement ensures the correct transmission of forces.

More importantly, unlike the Nissan Patent, the invention disclosed and claimed in the present application does not require the addition of an entire "sub gear" to achieve these beneficial results, nor does the Nissan Patent either teach or suggest that the consistent transmission of forces can be achieved with an asymmetrical arrangement wherein one half-tooth is more rigid than its opposing counterpart.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the Nissan Patent neither teaches nor suggests the fundamental qualities of the present invention which lead to the beneficial results achieved by the present invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102 rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

5. *The Section 103 Rejection.* Claims 5 and 10-16 were rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over the Nissan Patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,127,041 to Imazaike ("*Imazaike*"). In making this rejection, the Office Action concedes that the Nissan Patent does not disclose that the thickness of the "hollowed" half tooth is substantially half that of the opposing "whole" half tooth.

Instead, the Office Action alleges that Imazaike teaches a gear "characterized in that the thickness of the hollowed half-tooth, on the pitch circle of the wheel is substantially, half that of the other half-tooth for the purpose of providing an elastic deformation upon receiving and external force acting on the tooth surface, and allowing means for making the degree of this elastic deformation variable." It is respectfully submitted that the Office Action mischaracterizes Imazaike in a critical manner, and that consequently the Office Action's reliance on Imazaike in support of the § 103 rejection.

In particular, it is submitted that Imazaike does not, in fact, disclose or suggest a gear having teeth in which each half-tooth consists of one half-tooth having a thickness that is one-half that of the opposing half-tooth. On the contrary, each and every embodiment disclosed and described in Imazaike has teeth each of which consisting of two symmetrically identical half-teeth. The section of the specification specifically called out in the Office Action (col. 2, lines 50-55) at best supports an assertion that Imazaike recognizes that the "tooth thickness or dimensions" can be varied to vary the elastic deformation under a given force.

Thus, it is submitted that the proposed hypothetical combination of the Nissan patent and Imazaike, even if made, would not result in a structure in accordance with

the invention disclosed and claimed in the present application. Moreover, since it has been shown above that the Nissan patent does not possess the qualities alleged in the Office Action to support a § 102 rejection, the proposed combination of the Nissan patent and Imazaike would not support a § 103 rejection, even if Imazaike possessed the properties alleged in the Office Action. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Assignee respectfully submits that each of the claims now pending in the application is allowable, and that the application as a whole is in proper form and condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that the application can be placed in even better condition for allowance, he is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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